

Keynote

Jason E. Lewis



Jason Edward Lewis is a digital media theorist, poet, and software designer. He founded Obx Laboratory for Experimental Media, where he conducts research/creation projects exploring computation as a creative and cultural material. He is the University Research Chair in Computational Media and the Indigenous Future Imaginary as well as Professor of Computation Arts at Concordia University, Montreal. Born and raised in northern California, Lewis is Hawaiian and Samoan.

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Excerpts from the talk

To dream freely of agency is to romanticize it. We often imagine our good actions and forget the bad, we dream of our freedoms and often forget our responsibilities. But dream freely we must if we are to imagine worlds that grow from radically different founding assumptions.

We must romanticize our sovereignty, imagining moments, lifetimes, indeed generations and arrows and epics.

Living with the control flipped in order to get a feel for what it means to live self determined lives. The romance generates excitement, which in turn, generates energy to confront the unending everyday challenges that must be overcome to change the scenario. Those that are told about us, and which we tell about ourselves. We have to allow ourselves these romantic gestures.

The future takes practice, or at least it does if we want to shape a future defined by Indigenous sovereignties. Different passports must be explored to disentangle us from colonization. We need to continually remember our agency while evolving into new forms that are adapted to our lives now.

How do we practice the future? We create new stories about how we want things to be and inhabit them for a while to see how they fit. We come back to them again and again, each time learning something new about their texture, how this fits with that. We mutate the stories and follow the permutations where they might lead.